

To the Members of the Appropriation Committee:

As the parent of a 34 year old son who has IDD, I wanted to register my profound disappointment and anger over the recent rescissions that have been visited on the Department of Developmental Services for FY 2015 and the deep budget cuts for that Agency reflected in the Governor's budget for FY 2016 and FY 2017. Our son, Daniel, was fortunate enough to have DDS supports from the time he graduated from High School and he is now living in a supported apartment as a client of the Arc of the Farmington Valley. He works in group supported employment at the Davidson Company in Newington each day, has a rich social and recreational life and is a contributing member of society. In short, he has achieved the dream that we and he had for his life from the time he was first diagnosed with IDD.

Tragically, the rescissions and budget cuts imposed on DDS will make the achievement of such dreams by those with IDD more difficult, if not impossible to attain. Even money for new graduates has been eliminated in the FY 2016 and 2017 budget, which means those individuals will lose the growth they experienced in the education system as they sit at home waiting for benefits. The overall budget cuts will also adversely impact Day Program and Employment supports and leave unaddressed a waiting list of over 2000 individuals requiring residential supports. How can we allow this situation to impact those who are the weakest in our society, even as millions of budget dollars are being expended or allocated for roads and bridge repairs, corporate grants and incentives and raises for the Governor's top staffers. It is unconscionable and must not be allowed to continue!

Please take action now to stop the cuts to DDS, restore the rescissions, fund the waiting list and fully fund DDS support. We and our children are counting on you and all of Connecticut is waiting to see how you answer these very pressing human needs.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Frederick S. Lenz, Jr

Simsbury.